

# Miramonte's Mike MacDonald's career as a rugby player and coach



Mike MacDonald on the Cal rugby team

Photo provided

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For the last nine years,

MacDonald has been working as an assistant coach for California, an opportunity that ironically came about due to

an injury he had suffered while playing in England: "In my last season in England, I hurt my shoulder and had

surgery after the season so my playing options were limited. At this point, I was back in Berkeley getting rehab and was asked by Coach Clark and Coach Billups if I wanted to do some volunteer work with the team. I jumped at the chance and threw myself into it. Playing rugby is what I have done since I was 15 and it's something that I'm passionate about and I'm lucky to be able to continue to be affiliated with the game."

Lamorinda continues to be a source of talent for the California rugby team with three residents currently on their roster - Sophomore Miles Beaubelle (Orinda), senior Niki Moore (Moraga) and senior Kevin Tuholski (Lafayette). "With so many Cal graduates living in the area, there continues to be a great connection with the players moving on from Lamorinda to Berkeley," said MacDonald.

As with most players, it was something of a revelation

for MacDonald to discover the difference between coaching and playing: "It's the amount of detail that has to go into the preparation and how labor intensive it is. As a player, the game plan gets put in front of you and your job is to follow it."

MacDonald believes that it is the history and culture of the Cal program whose initial year was 1882, which is most important to the overall success of the program: "It's the way that everyone approaches the game with no one greater than the sum of its parts. Everyone buys into the system, the ethos of the team and staying humble and being known by your deeds. You learn to be grateful for everything and entitled to nothing. You're standing on the shoulders of the people that came before you. There's a lot on the plate for the players that walk in as freshman and sophomores and they soon realize that it's a real privilege to play for the team."

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